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COUNTRY Hungary
SUBJECT Activities of the State Bureau of
Religious Affairs/Techniques Used to
Control the Catholic Church

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1. Until December of 1951 the State Bureau of Religious Affairs, headquarters in Budapest, sent reliable civilians to the various dioceses to control and direct the activities of bishops. These so-called "Assistants to the Bishop" were at the bishops' sides at all times. Any decisions in ecclesiastical matters or matters pertaining to proper functioning of a diocese had to be reviewed by the "assistant" who in turn would forward information to Budapest for final approval. A bishop's letter to the parish pastors had to be censored before mailing. Often times, sentences or paragraphs were added to the bishop's letter by the State Bureau of Religious Affairs. In all cases these additions were contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Failure to sign such a letter or directive, on the part of the bishop, meant immediate arrest and imprisonment.

2. In early 1952, the mistake of using civilians as assistants had been realized and in their places "Priests of Peace" were appointed to carry on the same duties.

3. I would estimate that there are approximately 30 "Priests of Peace" in all of Hungary.

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4. In 1952 only four seminaries for theological studies were in operation. The seminaries were located in Eger, Győr, Budapest, and Kalocsa. It was here that the "Priests of Peace" made attempts to introduce Marxism with no success. To counteract this failure the régime planted students in the seminaries to act as spies.

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5. The following are some of the techniques used to control the Catholic Church:

- a) Priests with influence or reputation are immediately removed.
- b) Appointments and transfers of priests and pastors are made at the discretion of the State Bureau of Religious Affairs.
- c) A bishop's letter to his pastors undergoes censorship before mailing.
- d) Priests who refuse reading a bishop's letter are arrested.
- e) A constant surveillance of the entire clergy. The bureau is fully aware of who the visitors are and how often such visits are made.
- f) Refusal to give Christian burial to known Communists results in disappearance of pastor.
- g) Priests are not allowed to teach religion to school children.
- h) In the confessional a priest can give little, if any, advice for fear that he may be talking to a Communist who would report him immediately.

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